

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESKTOP

by Jennifer Burek Pierce
Editor, *Indiana Libraries*

This general issue of *Indiana Libraries* focuses on Youth and Reading. A recent survey of *Indiana Libraries* readers indicates this is an area some would like to read more about. While youth services librarians are likely to find these articles most immediately relevant to their working lives, I'm hopeful that these essays will offer librarians in all venues insights into their patrons' lives as readers. These authors delve into the types of books, programming, and issues that have constituted patrons' experiences with libraries and reading during their formative years.

Lee Ann Kee describes her experiences working with the Young Hoosier Book Award committee. She notes both how the committee makes its decisions and the responsibilities of membership.

Lori Caskey Sigety offers ideas on youth programming. She provides an introduction to and a script for a creative, interactive program for young library users and their parents that garnered both patron participation and even media coverage at the St. Joseph Public Library earlier this year.

Mary Watkins explains her approach to working with younger patrons in the school media center. Her aims include both teaching students about effective use of the library and encouraging teens to think about librarianship as a career choice.

Encouraging reading is one common concern. Whether boys read as much as girls do and how to encourage male readers are topics that have been discussed by figures ranging from popular youth authors to scholarly researchers. Angie Woodson takes on this topic in her essay with some provocative ideas about the roots of the problem. Daniell Wilkins considers how comic books and graphic novels can encourage reluctant readers of either sex, explaining the merits of this genre and what librarians involved with collection development should consider when adding graphic novels to their collections.

Young adult literature sometimes engages sensitive social issues. Kathryn Jacobs discusses gender issues as they relate to specific young adult novels. Two authors approach the matter of depictions of homosexuality in young adult literature. Jennifer Chance Cook evaluates Indiana libraries' holdings of young adult literature with homosexual characters or themes. Dawn Savage of IMCPL offers a historical and analytical overview of the

ways homosexuality is treated in young adult literature, identifying themes and issues to consider in collection development. Lisa Habegger looks at the phenomenon known as the bleak novel – works which portray realistic topics from a dark or gritty perspective.

The needs of youth from different cultures receives consideration from Rebecca Perkins. Her essay focuses on the needs of third-culture kids, or those who grow up with blended cultural norms.

Alberta Davis Comer, ISU librarian and ALA *Cognotes* reporter, had an opportunity to interview feminist author Gloria Steinem. Their conversation included a discussion of the importance of libraries to Steinem as she was growing up. The write-up, parts of which were first published in *Cognotes* at the Toronto convention, includes Steinem's reflections on a range of contemporary issues.

To complement these adult perspectives on youth and reading, I'm including just a few voices of teen readers themselves. Dakota Derryberry describes her interest in what might be termed trash fiction as a respite from her more serious reading. Caitlin Watt focuses on fan fiction – a genre of electronic reading and writing which uses established characters from published works as the basis for an online exchange of writers and readers.

Additionally, there are a few informal reflections from adult readers on selected, high-profile young adult novels. Rachael McClellan, Raenell Smith, and Tom Smith offer brief responses to works which have generated both kudos and complaints.

In a nod to this focus on libraries' younger users, *Indiana Libraries* columns consider youth as well. In *Management Basics*, Carolyn Wiethoff writes about the cultural differences between workers of different generations. In *The Well-Read Librarian*, Kathryn Franklin shares some key articles on providing reference services to young users.

As a final note, *Indiana Libraries* is in transition to the use of the American Psychological Association style sheet (see www.apastyle.org for details) for documentation of the use of sources. While there is some variability in the style sheet used by authors in this issue, in the future, we ask all authors to work with APA conventions.

Jennifer Burek Pierce, Editor, *Indiana Libraries*
jenpierc@iupui.edu